



**Rachel Carson Reserve  
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, 21 March, 2012, 9-11 am**

<b>LAC Members</b>	<b>Affiliation/Interest</b>	<b>Present</b>
Ms. Heather Styron	N.C. Division of Coastal Management	Yes
Mr. Perry Barrow	Community Member	No
Chief Steve Lewis	Beaufort Police Department	No
Ms. Kelly Odom	N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries	No
Mr. Frank Tursi	N.C. Coastal Federation	No
Ms. Ann Carter	Community Member	No
Mr. John Fussell	Community Member	Yes
Dr. Dan Rittschoff	Duke Univ. Marine Lab	No
<b>Others in Attendance</b>		
Paula Gillikin	DCM, Central Sites Manager	
Lori Davis	DCM, Reserve Education Coordinator	
Whitney Jenkins	DCM, Reserve Coastal Training Program Coordinator	
Robin Newton	Public	
Rett Newton	Public	
Wendy Merrill	Public	

**Reserve Update - Paula Gillikin**

**Staffing News**

- Ms. Lori Davis, previously Education Specialist with the Reserve, has taken the position of Education Coordinator. Ms. Davis will continue to carry out her duties from the Beaufort office.
- Ms. Paula Gillikin has taken the position of Central Sites Manager with the Reserve. In this new position, she will be managing both the Permuda Island and Rachel Carson Reserves. Ms. Gillikin will remain in the Beaufort office.

## Local Advisory Committee Operating Procedures Document

The Reserve finalized the operating procedures document and sent it out to the Local Advisory Committee members. The document is also accessible on the Reserve's website. The Reserve is currently holding an application period for new community members and organizations. The following seats have been advertised for the Rachel Carson site: commercial user, traditional user, volunteer, education, recreational user (2 seats), community organization, and adjacent property owner. The application period ends on March 31. Postnote: the application period was extended through April 10<sup>th</sup>.

## **Rachel Carson Reserve Update – Paula Gillikin**

### **Old Business**

#### Public communications plan

During the fall meeting, the committee discussed ways to educate the public regarding protection of the site and appropriate visitor use. A broad and continuous education effort was encouraged, including a general public relations campaign. Members of the public in attendance at the meeting also encouraged this idea. Based on this input, Reserve staff and volunteers drafted a public communications plan which was presented to the committee. The committee was supportive of the plan as it was presented.

### **New Business**

#### Education (Lori Davis)

Current education efforts at the Rachel Carson site focus on K-12 field trips, general outreach field trips, teacher workshops, and a volunteer-led public field trip series. Two types of trips are offered depending on the nature and size of the group: boat tours and nature hikes. A pre-trip curriculum is currently being developed so that K-12 students can become familiar with estuaries, Rachel Carson, and safety and dress code prior to visiting the Rachel Carson Reserve.

#### Feral horses

The current population consists of 32 horses with 17 females and 15 males. Immunocontraceptive vaccines were administered during the month of February. The goal for the birth control program is to allow a few foals to be born in the next few years. The Reserve, National Park Service – Cape Lookout, and the Foundation for Shackleford horses are working together on an education campaign to protect horse welfare and visitor safety. All three organizations have concerns that some visitors are interacting with wild horses in an inappropriate (getting too close, trying to pet, chasing, etc.) manner that could cause direct or indirect harm to the horses, visitors, and/or visitors' pets.

#### Volunteer program and stewardship activities

This Spring, the Reserve will launch a "Site Stewards" program at the Rachel Carson site. Volunteers will be trained to patrol the property to increase monitoring of site conditions and educate visitors about the reserve and visitor use guidelines. The Seabird Ecological Assessment Network (SEANET) surveys launched in November at Bird Shoal have proven to be a good way to increase monitoring of the site while contributing to an important seaboard-wide citizen science database. A new welcome sign (Front Street) and bulletin case (kiosk at Lenoxville boat ramp) have been installed. New trail markers, interpretive signs, and rules signs will be installed once the Reserve receives regulatory approval.

### Hunting

Paula Gillikin has received several comments from citizens during the fall/winter regarding concerns over hunting on Carrot Island. Some citizens were surprised to learn that hunting is allowed on Carrot Island outside of town limits. Safety concerns were voiced by all. Some citizens thought hunting should not be allowed in a nature preserve. Paula has witnessed a gentleman repeatedly hunting within town limits where hunting is not allowed. With increased visitation to the site throughout the year, Paula is concerned there may be negative interactions between hunters and horses or visitors. She will continue to document citizen and visitor concerns.

### Dredging

The Coastal Reserve may receive requests from private entities or municipalities to deposit dredge spoil material in the Corps easement located on the Rachel Carson Reserve. The Reserve does not currently have a policy in place to address these kinds of requests, but is in the process of developing one.

## **Member Roundtable and Other Comments**

- Hunting is a traditional activity at the site and allowed per the Reserve rules outlined in the North Carolina Administrative code. Therefore, it may be difficult to prohibit. Education is the key to making sure hunting is conducted in the proper place. Signage may help with the problem of hunting within town limits. However, signage may encourage more hunting which isn't necessarily desirable.
- The Town can enforce hunting within town limits. This will be difficult given that officers do not patrol the reserve and access is an issue since the Town does not currently have a boat.
- It is important to point out that many Beaufort residents and vacationers use the Rachel Carson site during spring and summer weekends. This may increase justification for the Town patrolling the site when they get a boat. Atlantic Beach has a water patrol officer. It may be a good idea to look into how they got the funding (Homeland Security grant).
- There is a concern that - due to the movement of Bird Shoal northward - shorebird feeding areas are being lost due to sedimentation.

## **Public Comments**

- Wendy Merrill commented that she witnessed five dogs off leash at Bird Shoal. She inquired about how these violations should be documented. She would like to learn, as a volunteer, how to approach people in an effective and positive manner to help solve the issue.
- Rett Newton commented that he has continually witnessed dogs off leash on the site. Visitors should be approached with a positive message. Visitors often do not understand what harm (especially to wildlife) comes from letting dogs run free. Enforcement of laws within the Town's jurisdiction at the Rachel Carson Reserve, should be partly the police department's responsibility. The Parks and Recreation Advisory board may be able to discuss this issue, as the Rachel Carson Reserve is a spot where many locals recreate. Hunting on Carrot Island poses a significant safety issue for both humans and non-humans. Rett is grateful for the Reserve's

efforts to protect the site from inappropriate use. Creating reverence for the site through positive messaging is crucial. The Reserve might consider packaging historical info about the site and presenting it to the public via the Reserve webpage.

- Robin Newton commented that for a hunter to injure or kill a horse or visitor with bird shot, it would have to be a relatively close and direct shot. The chances of this happening are relatively small. Robin has noticed ammunition shells that were either left as debris at the site or washed up with the tide. In advance of the Site Stewards training, it would be helpful to come up with a script to provide to volunteers for use in the field. This script would support consistency and positive tone of messages that are given to visitors. Robin inquired about regulations governing aircraft (particularly tourist helicopters) that fly over and sometimes hover over the reserve. She is concerned that low flights are causing disturbances to horses and birds. Reaching out to sightseeing companies might be a good idea.

### **Meeting follow up**

Look up laws governing how close aircraft can approach the area of the reserve.